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## UNCLASSIFIED LANGUAGES OF THE SOUTHEAST

By JOHN R. SWANTON

IN Bulletin 43 of the Bureau of American Ethnology I undertook a classification of the Indian tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the adjacent coast of the Gulf of Mexico, based on known or indicated similarities in their languages; and in another paper, now practically completed, I have attempted the same work for those between the area first covered and the Atlantic Ocean. Here I intend merely to indicate a few of the more important results, and to list the languages which I have so far been unable to classify with certainty, in order to put the present status of the subject on record.

So far, my work reveals no new stock language; nor does it indicate the likelihood of finding any, except in one region, southern Florida. Some years ago Mooney called attention to the fact that there was not sufficient evidence on which to extend the Timuquanan family over the southern part of the peninsula. In the first place, the tribes called "Timucua" by the Spaniards never included those south of Tampa Bay and Cape Cañaveral; and, secondly, although we have scarcely any linguistic material from the South Florida tribes, a comparison of the place-names in the two areas shows striking differences. At the same time, they seem to indicate that South Floridians—the Caloosa, Ais, Tekesta, and their neighbors—were related to each other, the differences between them being probably only dialectic. Other evidence points toward a connection between all of these and the tribes of the Muskogean family; but definite classification must wait upon further discoveries, which can hardly be outside of manuscripts, since there is small ground for hope that any speakers of the old Florida languages have survived to the present day. If a Muskogean connection were

actually established, an interesting question would at once arise as to how it came about that the Muskogean stock was cut in two by a people entirely distinct from it, or only very remotely related.

All of the other tribes which history reveals to us as living in the Southeast probably belonged to the stocks already recognized. In the majority of cases we can prove this, or at least show its extreme likelihood; but there are a few tribes whose position is uncertain. I will review them briefly.

Beginning at the northeast, the first problematical tribe is the Coree, which lived about Cape Lookout and Core Sound, on the coast of North Carolina. In this neighborhood three stocks met. Northward began that fringe of Algonquian peoples which extended unbrokenly to the St. Lawrence, south were Siouan tribes on Cape Fear River, and inland the Iroquoian Tuscarora. So far, I am aware of but one fragment of evidence bearing on the affinities of the Coree. This is dropped incidentally by Lawson, who says: "I once met with a young Indian woman that had been brought from beyond the mountains, and was sold a slave into Virginia. She spoke the same language as the Coramine [Coree], that dwell near Cape Lookout, allowing for some few words, which were different, yet no otherwise than that they might understand one another very well."<sup>1</sup>

If any theory may be based upon this, it seems to exclude the Siouan connection and to point to Iroquoian relationship, the Iroquois having been the principal enemies of the tribes of this area.

The Pascagoula of the river which now bears their name cannot be placed with

<sup>1</sup> Lawson, *History of North Carolina*, 280.

certainly, because, while they were always closely associated with the Siouan Biloxi, they are just as constantly distinguished from them. Their name, which signifies "Bread People," is from Choctaw or a related dialect. This circumstance, contrasted with the fact that Biloxi is a corruption of the proper Siouan term for that tribe, along with some additional bits of evidence, have led the writer to consider the Pascagoula Muskhogean, but the proof is insufficient.

The Grigra, or Gri, formed a distinct village among the Natchez Indians; but Du Pratz states that they were an alien people, whose language was distinguished by the use of a well-developed *r*.<sup>1</sup> From the fact that they shared this peculiarity with four neighboring tribes,—the Tunica, Yazoo, Koroa, and Tiou,—while it was absolutely wanting from the tongues of the other people of that section, I have, in Bulletin 43, assigned all of these conjecturally to one stock, called from the only recorded language Tunican. At the time when I wrote the above work, my argument was rather weak, because the association between the five tribes was based merely on circumstantial evidence, albeit rather strong evidence of that class. Recently, however, my attention has been called to the following important statement in the "Journal of Diron d'Artaguet," under date of Jan. 14, 1723: "We summoned the Natchez chiefs to supply us with provisions, which they agreed to do; also the chief of the Tyous. This is a small nation which has its village a league to the south of the [Natchez] fort. This nation is not very large, consisting of only 50 men bearing arms. It has the same language as the Thoniquas [Tunica], and does not differ from them in any way as to customs."<sup>2</sup>

This strengthens the whole case very considerably, since circumstantial evidence

connecting Yazoo and Koroa with Tunica was stronger than that linking Tiou and Tunica, until the discovery of this reference. Nevertheless, Grigra still remains somewhat in doubt, since the tribe cannot be traced back to Yazoo River, like all of the others of the stock, and Du Pratz tells us that it united with the Natchez earlier than the Tiou.

The Opelousa lived west of the Mississippi, near the place which perpetuates their name. Although this name is in Choctaw, the tribe certainly was not Muskhogean. It is always referred to as allied with the Chitimacha and Atakapa, but rather with the latter than the former. For this reason I have placed it provisionally in the Atakapan stock, but absolute proof is wanting.

The Okelousa, or "Black Water" people,—not to be confused with the preceding,—are mentioned seldom. They seem, however, to be associated with the Houma, who are known to have been of Muskhogean stock, and hence I have so classed them.

The Bidai were on and near a western branch of the middle Trinity River, Texas, called after them. The word is perhaps Caddo, but evidence collected by Professor H. E. Bolton from the Spanish archives points to a connection with the Atakapan stock.

A great many tribes, and probably dialects as well, have been exterminated throughout southern Texas, but there is as yet no evidence that any of these was divergent enough to be given an independent position. In fact, relationships are rather indicated between the bodies now rated independent.

It is gratifying to the writer to find that of three cases in which proof of relationship has come to light since the publication of Bulletin 43, the writer's hypothesis, based on circumstantial evidence or slight indications, was established in two cases and disproved in but one, the case for which was exceptionally weak. One of these was the status of the Tiou Indians, which has already been considered. Another was the position of the

<sup>1</sup> Du Pratz, *Histoire de La Louisiane* (1758), 2: 222-226.

<sup>2</sup> *Travels in American Colonies* (ed. by Mereness), 46.

Akokisa. My belief that this tribe, or group of tribes, belonged to the Atakapan stock, has been absolutely confirmed by the discovery of a vocabulary of forty-five words in an unpublished manuscript among the valuable documents in the Edward E. Ayer collection at the Newberry Library, Chicago. This vocabulary, and an equally valuable Karankawa vocabulary in the same manuscript, will be reproduced and fully discussed in a future number of this Journal. From a second document in the Ayer collection I obtained, however, a correction of my position regarding the classification of two little tribes on Bayou La Fourche, near the mouth of the Mississippi, —the Washa and Chawasha. These I had considered Muskogean; but the author of the document just alluded to, who seems to have been none other than Bienville, and should therefore know whereof he writes, not only states that these tribes have always spoken almost the same language ("ont toujours parlé presque la même langue"), but

begins his account of the Chitimacha by saying that the Tchioutimachas, who live six leagues from the Houmas on the left bank of the river, are of the same genius and the same character as the Tchaouachas and the Ouachas, with whom they have always been allied, and who also speak almost the same language ("Les Tchioutimachas qui demeurent à six lieues des Houmas sur la gauche du fleuve sont du même génie, et du même caractère que les Tchaouachas, et les Ouachas auxquels ils ont toujours été alliés, et dont ils parlent aussi presque la même langue").

This carries the stock boundary of the Chitimacha eastward over all of Bayou La Fourche and as far as the mouths of the Mississippi.

In general, it may be said that the number, position, and boundaries of all of the linguistic groups of the Southeast, at least those eastward of the Mississippi River, are now satisfactorily established, such lacunæ as exist being small and of little apparent importance.